

Message Text

SECRET

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13 10
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

AS-01 CAB-02 DOTE-00 EB-07 COME-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01

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FM USINT BAGHDAD
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INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

S E C R E T BAGHDAD 1182

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR IZ
SUBJ: U.S.-IRAQI RELATIONS AND THE UN ANTI-ZIONIST RESOLUTION

1. SUMMARY: DIRECTOR GENERAL OF POLITICAL DEPT. OF FOREIGN MINIS-
TRY IBRAHIM AL-WALI DISCUSSED UN ANTI-ZIONIST RESOLUTION AND ITS
EFFECT ON U.S.-IRAQI RELATIONS. HE MAINTAINED THAT ZIONISM IS
POLITICAL MOVEMENT DESIGNED TO BENEFIT JEWISH PEOPLE OF WORLD
AT EXPENSE OF NON-JEWISH POPULATABN OF PALESTINE AND THUS BY
ITS OWN ADMISSION IS RACIALLY DISCRIMINATORY. I POINTED OUT
THAT REGARDLESS OF MERITS OF RESOLUTION, INFLAMING THIS EMO-
TIONAL ISSUE AT THIS TIME WOULD NOT HELP SOLVE PROBLEMS OF THE
MIDDLE EAST. WALI SAID THAT EMOTIONAL U.S. REACTION TO RESOLU-
TION HAD MADE STRONG NEGATIVE IMPRESSION ON IRAQI LEADERSHIP BUT
HE WOULD STILL WORK FOR BETTER U.S.-IRAQI RELATIONS. HE AGREED

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AT MY REQUEST TO SUPPORT USINT REQUEST FOR LANDING PERMISSION

FOR CHARTERED AIRCRAFT BRINGING ALLIS-CHALMERS BOARD OF DIRECTORS TO IRAQ. PERMISSION WAS GRANTED BY CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITIES ON FOLLOWING DAY. END SUMMARY

2. ON NOV. 12 I CALLED ON IBRAHIM AL-WALI, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE POLITICAL DEPARTMENT OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY. AMONG OTHER TOPICS, WE DISCUSSED THE UN ANTI-ZIONIST RESOLUTION. WALI, WHO IS NORMALLY A CALM, AND SOFT-SPOKEN INDIVIDUAL, SET FORTH WITH CONSIDERABLE CONVICTION THE ARAB VIEW THAT ZIONISM IS A POLITICAL MOVEMENT DESIGNED TO BENEFIT JEWISH PEOPLE OF THE WORLD AT EXPENSE OF THE NON-JEWISH PEOPLE OF PALESTINE. HE SAID USG SERIOUSLY MISJUDGED IRAQI MOTIVES IN SPONSORING RESOLUTION WHICH WERE NEITHER OBSCURE NOR ANTI-SEMITIC. IRAQ'S PURPOSE WAS TO CALL WORLD'S ATTENTION TO FACT THAT ZIONISM HAD DONE CONSIDERABLE HARM TO NON-JEWISH PALESTINIANS AND HOPEFULLY TO LET ISRAELIS KNOW THAT THERE ARE LIMITS TO WHICH THEY CAN PURSUE THEIR POLICIES WITHOUT OUTRAGING WORLD OPINION. WARMING TO HIS TOPIC, WALI WENT ON TO SAY THAT THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT ISRAEL IS A JEWISH STATE, AND THAT ZIONISM EMBRACES A CONCEPT OF JEWISH PEOPLEHOOD THAT BY DEFINITION DISCRIMINATES AGAINST NON-JEWISH PALESTINIANS. THE NON-JEWS ARE THUS EXCLUDED FROM MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION IN THE POLITICAL ENTITY THAT CONTROLS THEIR HOMELAND. THIS CAN ONLY BE DESCRIBED AS RACIAL DISCRIMINATION.

3. WALI WENT ON TO SAY THAT USG, WITH ITS EMOTIONAL ATTACKS ON THE RESOLUTION, HAD SEEMED STRANGELY BLIND TO WHAT HAD HAPPENED AND IS STILL HAPPENING TO NON-JEWISH PALESTINIANS. EVEN MORE PUZZLING, SAID WALI, WAS EXTENT TO WHICH USG SEEMED STRANGELY BLIND TO ITS OWN INTERESTS. NOT ONLY DID OUR EMOTIONAL REACTION HARM OUR INTERESTS IN ARAB WORLD, BUT WE WERE ALSO THREATENING TO WITHDRAW OUR SUPPORT FOR THE UN'S ANTI-APARTHEID EFFORTS. THE USG SHOULD CONSIDER HOW SUCH A STAND WOULD AFFECT ITS INTERNATIONAL IMAGE.

4. WALI ENDED BY SAYING THAT HE HAD WORKED HARD WITHIN THE GOI TO PROMOTE BETTER RELATIONS WITH THE USG BUT OUR EMOTIONALISM ON THIS ISSUE WAS MAKING IT VERY DIFFICULT FOR HIM. HE SAID THAT OUR STATEMENTS AT THE UN HAD HAD A STRONG NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THE IRAQI LEADERSHIP.

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5. I TOLD WALI THAT I SAW NO POINT IN REPEATING THE USG POSITION ON ISRAEL AND ZIONISM AS I KNEW THAT HE, AS A MEMBER OF THE IRAQI UN DELEGATION, WAS WELL-ACQUAINTED WITH USG VIEWS. I DID WANT TO SAY, HOWEVER, THAT I BELIEVED THAT THE FUNCTION OF A DIPLOMAT WAS TO REDUCE TENSION AND TRY TO IMPROVE RELATIONS BETWEEN COUNTRIES. THIS REQUIRED CUTTING THROUGH THE EMOTIONALISM TO THE REAL UNDERLYING ISSUES IN AN ATTEMPT TO DEAL WITH THEM CALMLY AND CONSTRUCTIVELY. I SAID I WAS DISTURBED AT THE EMOTIONAL-

ISM GENERATED BY THE ANTI-ZIONISM RESOLUTION AND I BELIEVED THAT THIS RESOLUTION, REGARDLESS OF WHAT ONE BELIEVED OF ITS MERITS, WOULD ONLY MAKE THE REAL, UNDERLYING PROBLEMS OF THE MIDDLE EAST MORE DIFFICULT TO DEAL WITH. THE LONG HISTORY OF ANTI-SEMITISM IN THE WORLD AND THE MEMORY OF HITLER'S ATROCITIES MADE THIS ISSUE PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE IN THE UNITED STATES AND WESTERN EUROPE. INFLAMING THESE SENSITIVITIES WAS NOT A GOOD WAY TO GO ABOUT RESOLVING THE REAL PROBLEMS THAT EXISTED IN THE AREA.

6. WALI AGREED WITH ME ON THE ROLE OF A DIPLOMAT AND PROMISED TO DO WHAT HE COULD TO WORK WITH ME IN IMPROVING U.S.-IRAQI RELATIONS.

7. I TOLD WALI THAT WE COULD START WITH ONE IMMEDIATE PROBLEM. THE ENTIRE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF ALLIS-CHALMERS AND THEIR WIVES WERE SCHEDULED TO LAND IN IRAQ IN ONE WEEK'S TIME AND THE IRAQI CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITIES HAD REFUSED TO ALLOW THEIR TWO CHARTERED PLANES TO LAND BECAUSE THE PLANES WERE U.S.-REGISTERED. THE GOI APPARENTLY HAD A RULE THAT NO U.S.-REGISTERED AIRCRAFT, APART FROM PAN AM AIRCRAFT, WOULD BE PERMITTED TO LAND IN IRAQ OR OVERFLY IRAQI TERRITORY. I ADDED THAT THE CHAIRMAN OF ALLIS-CHALMERS WAS VERY INTERESTED IN A VARIETY OF COMMERCIAL VENTURES IN IRAQ AND REFUSAL TO ALLOW THE PLANES TO LAND AT THIS LATE DATE WOULD MAKE A STRONG IMPRESSION ON A GROUP OF IMPORTANT U.S. BUSINESSMEN AND HAVE A VERY NEGATIVE IMPACT ON FUTURE U.S.-IRAQI COMMERCIAL RELATIONS.

8. WALI AGREED THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT PERMISSION BE GRANTED AND PROMISED TO INTERVENE PERSONALLY TO SUPPORT OUR REQUEST. HE COMMENTED THAT HE HOPED THE "SHOUTING IN NEW YORK" WOULD NOT PREVENT THE GRANTING OF THE CLEARANCE. HE SAID HE WOULD GIVE ME A REPLY WITH 24 HOURS.

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9. WALI WAS AS GOOD AS HIS WORD. THE NEXT DAY, NOV. 13, THE FOREIGN MINISTRY CALLED AND SAID THAT PERMISSION HAD BEEN GRANTED FOR THE TWOHULANL TO LAND.

10. IN SPITE OF THE VEHEMENCE OF HIS VIEWS ON ZIONISM, WHICH HE SHARES WITH MOST IRAQI OFFICIALS, WALI IMPRESSES ME AS A CAPABLE AND INTELLIGENT INDIVIDUAL WHO IS QUITE INTERESTED IN WORKING FOR BETTER U.S.-IRAQI RELATIONS. IT IS NOT CLEAR TO ME JUST HOW MUCH INFLUENCE HE EXERTS WITHIN THE IRAQI LEADERSHIP, BUT HIS PERFORMANCE IN THE CASE OF THE ALLIS-CHALMERS' AIRCRAFT WAS ENCOURAGING. HE SHOULD BE A VERY USEFUL CONTACT.

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Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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